WHO'S UP FOR GOLDEN GLOBES?
GLEE LEADS TV PACK WITH 5 NODS {page 20}

SPLIT
REYNOLDS, JOHANSSON CALL IT QUITS {page 24}

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News worth sharing.

Bieber cleared in laser-tag incident

RCMP close investigation against pop star Father of a younger boy came forward on Oct. 16, several hours after an alleged altercation during a laser-tag game in Richmond Mounties never specifically said Bieber, 16, was the focus of their investigation because, as a minor, his name is protected by law

Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber may be singing a happier tune after RCMP declined to recommend charges stemming from an incident during a laser-tag game.

"The evidence doesn't support (charges)," said Cpl. Sherrdean Turley. "There's certain elements or criteria that have to be met and, in this case, what was collected doesn't support a charge."

The father of a 12-year-old boy told police his son was assaulted by another boy and had minor injuries that didn't require medical attention at the time.

Bieber's camp never denied it and has never commented on the allegations.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rain. City

A woman carries a golf umbrella along Georgia Street yesterday afternoon.

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

When it rains here, it pours

Metro begins the first of three days celebrating Vancouver's famous rain and its impact on the city and its people. Today we take on umbrella etiquette — like oversized golf umbrellas on narrow sidewalks — and explore what wet-weather behaviour drives you nuts. Email us your thoughts and rainy-day photos at vancouverletters@metronews.ca or send us a tweet at @vancouvermetro. Story, Page 4.

Travel

Get away for the holidays

No shortage of Christmas attractions south of the border
Hit the slopes in Revelstoke
{pages 25-27}

Donor fatigue? You're not alone

Paul Sullivan on the accumulated impact of charity drives {page 19}

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▶ From left, Bill Vander Zalm, Marc Emery, Sidney Crosby, Carole James and Gordon Campbell. Who gets your vote as Metro's newsmaker of the year?

Who is Vancouver's newsmaker of 2010?

Players in political shakeups and golden Olympic moments counted among contenders

It was a great year to be a headline writer in Vancouver — with classic calamities like faulty Olympic cauldrons and bare ski hills, and your pick of political controversies.

There was the bizarre laser-tag incident — sorry, alleged incident — involving Justin Bieber, and the ongoing fiasco with the Olympic Village development.

Metro Vancouver wants to know what — or who — you think is the city's newsmaker of the year.

Maybe it's the sudden and back-to-back resignations of Premier Gordon Campbell and NDP Leader Carole James.

Have your say

▶ Tell us who rocked 2010 and why by emailing us at vancouverletters@metronews.ca or sending us a tweet via @vancouvermetro. Voting ends on Friday.

Or the imprisonment of Marc Emery for what some say was the "trivial" crime of selling pot seeds online.

Of course there's also Bill Vander Zalm and his anti-HST team, which may soon make history by forcing a referendum to repeal the highly unpopular tax.

And who can forget freestyle skier Alexandre Bilodeau, who won Canada's first Olympic gold on home soil.

Then, of course, there's Sidney Crosby, whose overtime goal on the last day of the Olympics secured a gold medal for Canada's men's hockey team against the Americans. METRO

Woman pleads guilty to tossing baby

A 20-year-old Richmond woman has pleaded guilty to throwing her baby's body into a dumpster before the newborn's remains were found in a landfill.

The woman admitted to improperly disposing of a body, but because of a publication ban the media can't report any details released in court yesterday, except that the woman will be sentenced in March.

But the background is known.

In January, police said the woman gave birth to a full-term baby boy without telling anyone, including her boyfriend, that she had been pregnant.

They said she had told her boyfriend she'd had a miscarriage and the two of them wrapped the dead baby in a towel and placed it in a garbage bag before throwing it in a dumpster.

By the time police learned of the baby's death, the contents of the dumpster had been taken to a landfill in Delta, where a team of 35 officers searched for several days before finding the remains. THE CANADIAN PRESS

1 news

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JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Pedestrians with umbrellas walk underneath an awning on Granville Street.

Umbrella etiquette pet peeves

Vancouverites also irritated by the use of mammoth golf umbrellas on narrow sidewalks in the city

KIMIYA SHOKOOHI
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

When rain comes out to play, etiquette gets washed way. Despite Vancouver's long-running rain-city status, perfecting parasol protocol is still a work in progress.

An informal survey conducted by Metro found "awning hoggers" top the list of umbrella pet-peeves — with one-third of participants marking it as their biggest rainy-day irk.

"It's especially annoying if you don't have an umbrella," Helen Yu, a 34-year-old downtown coffee shop owner, said while escaping the rain under a Davie Street awning. "I don't have one, so I'm walking under here to stay dry. If you do, stop hogging the space."

The second biggest complaint: Umbrella fender-benders with fellow pedestrians.

Standing at five-foot-11, BCIT student Karen Wazny vents her personal vex as "being tall and having rude shorter people practically poking me in the eye with their umbrellas."

Others resonate with irritations that come with wet umbrellas placed on bus and SkyTrain seats, ruining the spot for fellow riders.

Rounding up the list of annoyances are concerns about umbrellas opened indoors. "They throw that bad luck at you," said Srdjan Zivkovic, a 20-year-old Douglas College student about those neglecting superstitions. "Unless you got your rabbits foot in your pocket, it's doomsday by association."

RAIN CITY

Tomorrow

▶ Pick up Metro tomorrow for a look at the psychology of living in a rainy climate and things to do to beat the weather blues.

Tweet us your umbrella pet peeve. Tweet us at @vancouvermetro or vote at metronews.ca

Thoughts

What's your biggest umbrella pet peeve?

▶ "I hate it when people on the bus put their wet umbrella on the seat and no else can sit."
Ava Balingit, 19

▶ When there's shorter people with umbrellas and they poke you in the face as they walk by."
Bobby Grewal, 32

Battling more than rain

SARAH N. FITZGERALD/FOR METRO

▶ David McCormick

For many, the Lower Mainland's wet weather comes with the burden of carrying around an often-cumbersome umbrella. But what if you could turn your weather-based tool into your own personal defence device?

Academie Duello offers an umbrella self-defence workshop that will teach you how to use your wet weather companion to ward off any hooligans.

The course runs several times a year and is based on Bartitsu — a stick-fighting style developed in Victorian England.

David McCormick, who teaches the course, said it's quite popular.

"It's very energizing because unlike some martial arts (it's not) an exhaustive, fatiguing workout. (We) teach skills that are at the same time fun and practical so people can remember what they've learned."

The course, which lasts four hours, costs $60 and is good for most ages and body types, said McCormick.

As for the satisfaction level, McCormick said students are usually laughing when they leave, "and seeing a tool they use everyday in a whole new light."

SARAH N. FITZGERALD

Durability

- A stick umbrella is stronger than a folding one. Each joint enabling an umbrella to fold down is a point of weakness.
- The smaller the umbrella and the more times it folds compromises the umbrella's strength when fighting wind and wear.
- Look for umbrella ribs with a coated finish, which are better protected from rust and corrosion.
- Spring-loaded automatic openers exert heavy pressure on frames and are more costly to fix.

Tweets

We asked Metro readers what peeves them off in the rain:

[@shanoobioobi]
From a bus driver: shaking off your umbrella on the bus in my face. Two showers in one day. Uh, thanks?

[@LorienHenson
Oversize golf course size umbrellas, big enough for a family of 5 to fit underneath are TOO big for city sidewalks!

[@WhatsForLunchBC]
walking under awnings!!!!

I will purposely walk into you if you're doing that. you've been warned!!!

[@Sassy_M]
When people walk around with their umbrella leaning on their shoulder. It's like a plow takin out pedestrians left and right.

Have a favourite rainy day photo? Tweet us at @vancouvermetro or send us an email at vancouverletters @metronews.ca

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Air + 3 Nights + Car — from $529 + taxes & fees $121

INCLUDES accom in the heart of wine country & 3-day car rental with unlimited mileage.

New Orleans
Air + 3 Nights 4-Star — from $559 + taxes & fees $144

INCLUDES accom near the French Quarter and New Orleans famed riverfront. **ADD** New Orleans Harbour Cruise from $26.

Grand Canyon
Air + 3 Nights + Car — from $599 + taxes & fees $129

INCLUDES accom a short walk from the South Rim and 3-day car rental with unlimited mileage.

New York Air + 3 Nights 4 Star from $789 + taxes & fees $135

INCLUDES Manhattan accom.

Vacations

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Air + 7 Nights 4-Star — from $1399 + taxes & fees $370

INCLUDES accom in Tokyo's Ginza district. **ADD** Mt.Fuji & Hakone Tour from $274 per person.

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Air + 14 Nights + Tour — from $1499 + taxes & fees $210

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20-year plan will triple size of Hastings Park

A 20-year and $208-million master development plan for Hastings Park and the PNE was approved by Vancouver councillors last night.

The plan adds 20 hectares to the large East Vancouver park, home to the city's annual 17-day Pacific National Exhibition.

In a release, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson said the new plan triples the park's green space, to more than 30 hectares, from about 10 hectares.

Playland will also increase by about one-third.

Also included in the master plan is a pedestrian trail linking Hastings Park to the waterfront New Brighton Park and a greenway around the park's perimeter with more than five kilometres of bike and pedestrian trials.

METRO

60 seconds

▶ National Ballet of Canada principal dancer Sonia Rodriguez.

SONIA RODRIGUEZ

Spanish-born ballerina Sonia Rodriguez, a principal dancer with the National Ballet, will be in Vancouver this week for her 15th stint as the Sugar Plum Fairy in the holiday classic The Nutcracker. Metro caught up with the dancer to talk about her love of dance.

Q: So many little girls take ballet lessons. How did you decide you wanted this to be your career?
A: I think it sort of chose me. I started taking ballet when I was five but by the time I was 12 it had become part of who I was. I couldn't see myself doing anything else.

Q: What kind of training goes into becoming a professional ballerina?
A: It's a huge commitment. I was probably (training) seven days a week since the age of about twelve. To somebody from the outside it might have looked like a sacrifice, but growing up it was just all I wanted to do so.

Q: What's your schedule like now?
A: It's rigorous. A normal day (I) start at 10 a.m. (with) a class. And then you have six hours of rehearsal five (or six) times a week. There's always that unattainable perfection that you keep aiming for. As long as you feel challenged and inspired ... it's the most wonderful thing.

Q: How is the Nutcracker different from other productions?
It's a holiday tradition. The Nutcracker is something that people look forward to and it's part of their memories of their holiday time. That gives you a different feel and energy from the audience. It's a nice production to be part of.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

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Immigration consultant charged

A Burnaby, B.C., immigration consultant has been charged under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Canada Border Services Agency says Gongyou Mo, also known as Jason Mo, has been charged with seven offences dealing with counselling misrepresentation.

Mo also faces a single count of forgery for allegedly making false documents.

According to CBSA, the allegations are linked to fake school documents supplied to clients to support study permits or temporary resident visa applications.

The investigation into Mo's activities began in January 2007 and he makes his first court appearance in Vancouver on Jan. 26.

If convicted, Mo could face up to 10 years in prison.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2011 BUDGET

Council approves tax hike

Vancouver will see a 2.2 per cent property tax rate next year as council approved its 2011 budget last night.

The budget includes a $5.7-million increase for Vancouver police and no cuts to affordable housing, homelessness or environmental programs.

In a release, Mayor Gregor Robertson said the tax rate was raised 0.2 per cent after feedback from the public. The money includes $200,000 to the parks board to ensure washrooms stay open and $165,000 to restore hours at five library branches. JEFF HODSON

Holiday transit schedule

SkyTrain, SeaBus and buses will mostly operate on holiday schedules on Dec. 25 and Dec. 26, with extra service on Boxing Day to accommodate shoppers.

There will be no West Coast Express service between Christmas and Dec. 29. Transit will be free on New Year's Eve from 5 p.m. onwards.

Details are posted at translink.ca.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

Found foot baffles police

Police are seeking more information about a human foot that washed ashore in Washington state.

Tacoma police official Mark Fulghum said yesterday the right foot was in a boy's size 6 OzArk Trail hiking boot. He said the boots were sold in Wal-Mart in 2004-2005. It's not yet known if there's a link to cases in B.C., where seven feet have washed up in four years. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Is a penny removed a penny earned?

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

▶ Donna Nguyen of the Candy Aisle on Robson Street shows off a portion the store's wide selection of penny candy.

Senate committee recommends taking pennies out of circulation
A penny costs 1.5 cents to produce

KIMIYA SHOKOOHI
VANCOUVER@METRONEWS.CA

Keeping the penny is cents-less, the Senate finance committee decided yesterday.

The committee is recommending the federal government remove the coin from circulation and introduce guidelines on how purchases should be rounded.

"It's going to simplify things," said Mark Startup, president and CEO of Shelfspace (formerly Retail B.C.) in reference to a penniless world. "It will probably decrease the amount of transaction time at a retailer point of sale."

However, Jason McCann, owner of Vancouver's penny-candy-selling shop Candy Aisle, said giving penny the boot would not make a difference for businesses.

Because the value of the copper coin has fallen below its cost of production — each penny costs 1.5 cents to make — McCann believes eliminating the penny would be more beneficial to government than to business owners.

"It simplifies and cuts out transactions — how exactly?" McCann asked. "If I need to make change for your purchase, I need to go through the same number of steps, regardless of the amount being given back."

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News in brief

Nevada men due in court

HOME INVASION. Three Nevada men and a fourth man from Surrey are expected to appear in Vancouver court tomorrow on weapons charges — among others — after allegedly trying to force their way into a Coal Harbour apartment. The occupant of the home was allegedly in possession of drugs.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

Chilliwack man disappears

PUBLIC APPEAL. RCMP are asking for help finding a 64-year-old Chilliwack man who has disappeared under what police call suspicious circumstances. Investigators say they found evidence of a physical altercation at Robert-Jan Planje's home and that they're worried for his welfare.

KRISTEN THOMPSON

Torch blamed for UBC fire

EVACUATION. An acetylene torch accident is being blamed for a fire that broke out in UBC's Henry Argus Building yesterday. The early morning blaze resulted in the building's evacuation, but minimal damage and no injuries resulted, according to fire officials.

J.J. MCCULLOUGH

Woman charged after house-party stabbing

VIOLENCE. A Vancouver woman, 22, is facing charges after allegedly stabbing two men at a house party Monday night. The victims, aged 31 and 22, were treated for minor injuries to the head and shoulder after an apparent altercation broke out at a Seventh Avenue home.

J.J. MCCULLOUGH

Huge rail jam to hit Swangard Stadium

Snowdeo to combine riding and music and aim for Olympic vibe

JEFF HODSON
@METRONEWS.CA

Organizers of the largest snowboard rail jam ever planned for the Lower Mainland hope the event rekindles some of the fire and excitement of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Snowdeo, to be held Feb. 18 and 19 at Burnaby's Swangard Stadium, couples a two-day rail-jam competition — where riders execute tricks off urban features such as handrails and ledges — with live music and entertainment in a festival atmosphere.

Early bird ticket pricing for the inaugural event begins today and runs until Christmas.

"The real human-legacy side of the 2010 Winter Olympics was the ability to celebrate and have people come together and show their spirit," said Matthew Coyne, executive director of Tourism Burnaby. "This is a legacy of the Games, and we hope people will feel the same."

Local snowboarder Nate Butcher, who aims to compete in a Snowdeo qualifying event in the new year, said the rail jam is an opportunity to introduce the underground side of snowboarding to the general public.

"It's not often you get the chance to hit urban features inside a stadium with live music," Butcher said.

Details to come

- The musicals and competing athletes will be announced in the new year.
- Early bird tickets are $39 and available online at snowdeo.ca.

MIKELASTPHOTO.COM

▶ Snowboarder Nate Butcher does a frontside boardslide down a handrail.

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SOLAR SYSTEM

Volcanoes of ice on Titan, say scientists

Scientists said yesterday they have found the best evidence yet of ice volcanoes on Saturn's giant moon Titan.

Unlike volcanoes on Earth, such a volcano on Titan may spew ice and hydrocarbons instead of molten lava.

"We finally have some proof that Titan is an active world," said geophysicist Randolph Kirk of the U.S. Geological Survey, who presented the findings.

The latest evidence comes from the international Cassini spacecraft, which spied two peaks over 3,000 feet tall and what looked like old volcanic flows. Researchers said the landforms resembled Mount Etna in Italy or Laki volcano in Iceland.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Asylum seekers killed in boat wreck

A wooden boat packed with dozens of asylum seekers smashed apart on jagged rocks in heavy seas off an Australian island earlier today, flinging screaming women and children into churning whitewater and sending many people to their deaths.

Christmas Island residents on cliffs above watched in helpless horror as the boat broke apart with a crack, dumping passengers into monstrous waves that pounded them against the rocks. Rescue efforts were under way and officials said it was not immediately clear how many people were dead.

Acting Prime Minister Wayne Swan said the vessel was a smuggler's boat, but it was not clear how many people were on board or where they were from.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Violence greets Berlusconi's victory

PIER PAOLO CITO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ A police officer fires tear gas during clashes in Rome yesterday. Thousands of demonstrators marched, smashed shop windows, destroyed bank ATMs and set at least three vehicles on fire.

Down-to-the-wire confidence votes capped hours of tension inside and outside parliament

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi won back-to-back confidence votes yesterday in the Italian parliament, narrowly surviving one of the toughest fights of his political life. But violent protests greeted his victory, as rioters torched cars, smashed windows and clashed with police.

Riot police fired tear gas to try to disperse the crowds in Rome after earlier trying to cordon off the area around parliament. Clouds of tear gas and orange flares engulfed some streets. Shops full of Christmas goods hurriedly closed down, and employees at one bank cowered in fear as waves of stone-throwing youths swept by.

Tensions inside parliament's lower house had boiled over earlier in the day, as lawmakers pushed and shoved each other, forcing a brief suspension in the voting.

Ultimately, Berlusconi survived the Chamber of Deputies' no-confidence motion by just three votes after a more comfortable victory in the Senate earlier in the day. The outcome of the highly uncertain votes attested to Berlusconi's uncanny ability to survive, even when nearly all indications pointed to a government collapse. Yet it also indicated he will have a difficult time governing, given the narrow margin.

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Assange still in jail

Court grants bail, but Sweden appeals release of WikiLeaks founder Supporters posted bail

A British judge granted Julian Assange bail yesterday but the WikiLeaks founder will remain in custody for at least another 48 hours after Swedish prosecutors said they would challenge the decision.

Assange, a 39-year-old Australian, has already spent a week in a British jail following his surrender to police in a Swedish sex-crimes investigation. He denies any wrongdoing and his lawyers say he plans to fight Sweden's extradition request.

PETER MACDIARMID/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Julian Assange gestures as he arrives at court inside a prison van yesterday in London, England.

Britain's High Court will hear the Swedish appeal, although it wasn't immediately clear when.

Assange's lawyer, Mark Stephens, said his client's relief at the bail decision had already evaporated, calling it "unfortunate" that "the Swedes won't abide by the umpire's decision." **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Gas line blamed in hotel blast

Prosecutors say new evidence suggests a gas-line leak probably caused the Nov. 14 explosion that killed five Canadians and two Mexicans at a hotel on Mexico's Caribbean coast.

The attorney general of the state where the hotel is located says investigators found an unauthorized extension of a gas line under the hotel lounge where the blast occurred.

Attorney General Francisco Alor says the line had apparently been damaged and leaked prior to the blast.

Officials had earlier said an accumulation of swamp or sewage gas may have fuelled the blast.

Alor said yesterday that those may have contributed, but the heating-gas line appears to be the main culprit and may have been set off by a spark from an electric switch or plug.

Five Canadians, including a B.C. man, were killed in the explosion, along with two hotel workers, and 18 others, many of them from Ontario, were injured.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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300 stranded in SW Ontario snow storm

Military helicopters used in rescue effort 237 people airlifted from highway

A family en route to a beach vacation, truckers hauling loads, commuters and even a British hip-hop star unwittingly joined a 300-strong fraternity of snowbound motorists trapped in vehicles overnight as a fierce storm walloped southwestern Ontario.

With everyone believed to have been rescued from snow-swept Highway 402 by late yesterday afternoon, all that was left was a final sweep to make sure no one was missed — and a massive cleanup.

Some 300 people were thought to be stranded when drifting snow and zero visibility forced police to close a 30-kilometre stretch of the highway east of Sarnia on Monday.

Motorists had no option but to hunker down in their vehicles and wait for help.

That aid came with the daylight, as military helicopters and buses were employed to take 237 people to safety.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

300 Drifting snow and zero visibility trapped about 300 people in their vehicles on Highway 402, about 30 kilometres east of Sarnia.

GLENN OGILVIE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Randy Hills of London, Ont., a driver for Doug Coleman Trucking, walks away from his vehicle after police arrive to help on London Line, East of Sarnia, Ont., yesterday.

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Parties find consensus on pardons system

Reforms last June doubled waiting times for applications on serious crimes, including sex offences

A government move to flush out critics of reforms to the criminal pardons system has highlighted one key point of agreement: Convicted pedophiles should never be eligible.

Liberal, New Democrat and Bloc Quebecois MPs all made the same argument during two hours of debate at a special House of Commons committee hearing yesterday.

"What do we want to target? Pedophiles," Bloc Quebecois MP Maria Mourani said during an hour-long diatribe at the Public Safety committee.

The all-party consensus may not have been what the Conservatives hoped to see as the headline outcome.

The government has been hammering the Liberals, in particular, over their refusal to wave the pardons legislation through unaltered.

The Tories' trump card — repeated almost daily — has been to accuse the Opposition of siding with criminals, especially sex offenders, rather than victims.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Legislation

The reforms were a reaction to the case of convicted sex offender Graham James, who had been quietly pardoned under the old rules in 2007.

However, no government amendment deals with the most controversial aspect — a new rule that anyone convicted of more than three criminal offences is ineligible for life from applying for a record suspension.

India. Islam

▶ A Kashmiri Shiite Muslim boy bleeds as he flagellates himself during a Muharram procession in Srinagar, India.

MUKHTAR KHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Muslims enter month of mourning

Muharram is a month of mourning in remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Mohammed. The mourning reaches its climax on the 10th day, known as Ashura, on which the forces of Yazid killed the 72 individuals who fought, including Imam Hussain and his family and supporters. The women and children left living were made prisoners and transported to Yazid's court in Damascus.

Ghana starts oil production

The West African nation of Ghana is poised to begin pumping oil for the first time, kicking off a lucrative new industry expected to bring $1 billion annually to a part of the world where most people still get by on less than $2 a day. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dismissed files to be reviewed

Complaints of wrongdoing in the public service that were dismissed by the former integrity commissioner, Christiane Ouimet, will be reviewed, government and commission officials said yesterday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Child pornography ring busted

An international child pornography ring spanning three continents where members posted explicit images on an Internet message board has led to the arrests of more than a dozen people, authorities said yesterday.

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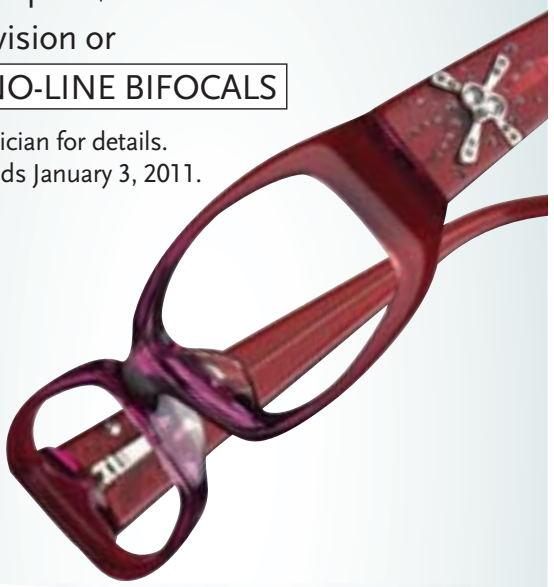

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the Bay OPTICAL

Forestry sector will profit this year: Report

Industry hit hard in the recession Wood products exports expected to have grown by 2.4% in 2010

The forestry industry will return to profitability this year due to a mini-boom in the Canadian housing market, a slight improvement in U.S. demand, and growing exports to China, a report by the Conference Board of Canada says.

"After three years of losses, a surge in prices and demand lined up favourably early this year for the industry," said Jacqueline Palladini, an economist at the Conference Board.

Canadian production likely grew by 10.6 per cent in 2010, according to the Conference Board's latest review of the industry.

Revenues are increasing this year for the first time since 2004. Despite rising costs, the industry is expected to post a profit of $476 million in 2010.

The forestry sector was particularly hard hit during the recent recession due to slower demand for lumber for construction that compounded problems caused by a decline in demand for paper and newsprint.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Housing is key

The Conference Board predicts the industry's rebound will continue in 2011, but the pace of growth will slow.

- **A slowdown** in the Canadian housing market next year will reduce the number of new homes being built which could hurt demand.
- **Uncertainty** in the U.S. housing market also remains a key concern.

Mass layoff. Slow growth

The Internet company has announced it plans to let go between 600 and 700 workers.

PAUL SAKUMA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tough times for Yahoo

Yahoo has announced a mass layoff which has been triggered by the Internet company's lacklustre growth. The planned cutbacks represent about five per cent of Yahoo's work force of 14,100 employees.

Market moment

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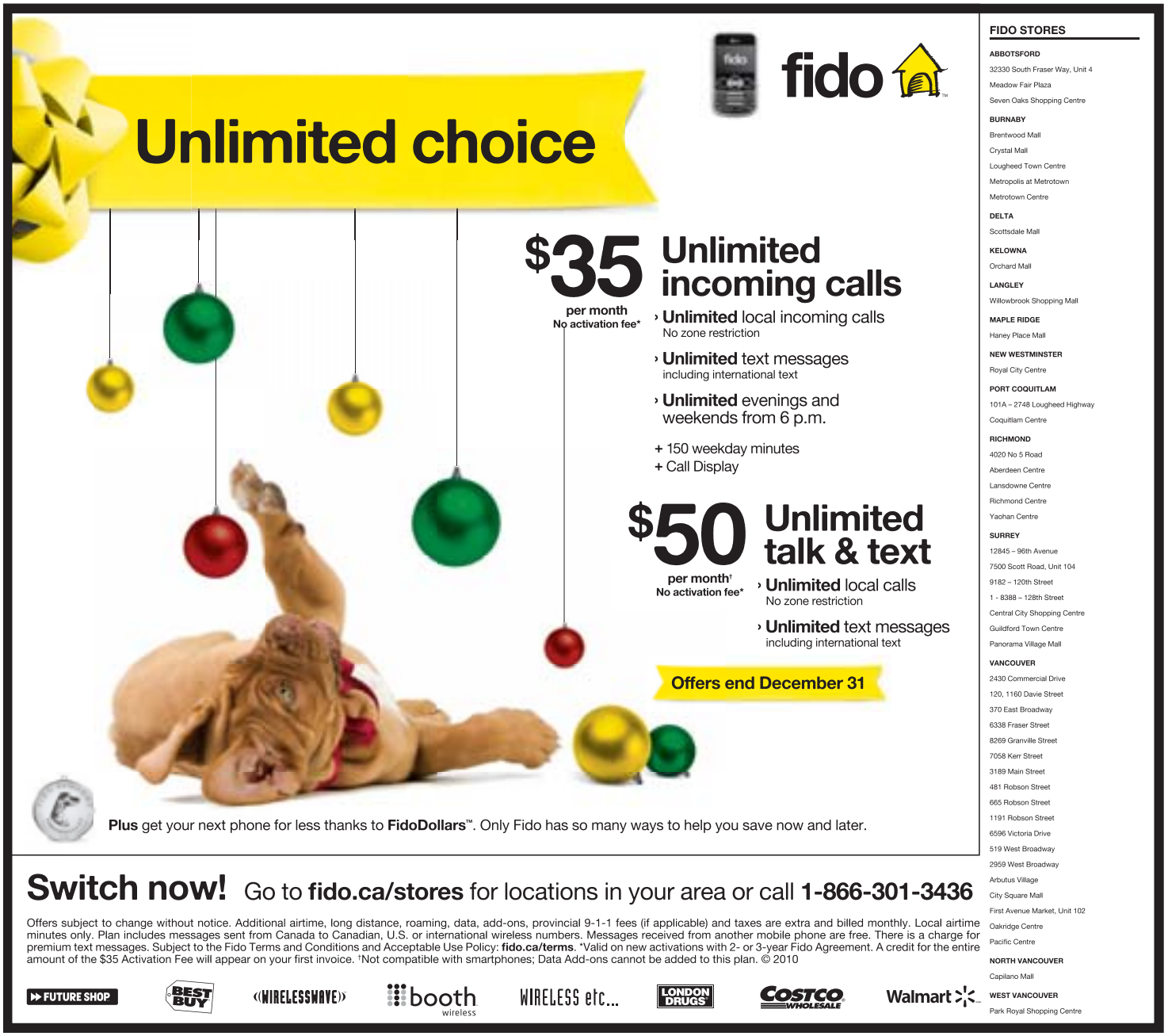

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Study: 'No credible evidence' cancer is caused by oilsands

However, risks posed by mining not being addressed by provincial or federal governments, study finds Alberta's environmental review process labelled 'seriously deficient'

Alberta's oilsands don't deserve all the bad press they've been getting, but the governments that regulate them do, concludes a new study by a panel of some of Canada's top scientists.

In a report to be released today, a seven-member panel from the Royal Society of Canada found there's "no credible evidence" that contaminants from the oilsands are boosting cancer levels in downstream communities.

It also found that the Athabasca River isn't currently threatened by industrial water use.

"There have been substantial improvements in the environmental performance of oilsands production," the report said, but added: "The current visibility of relevant provincial and federal agencies in dealing with major environmental challenges is not in line with the scale of those challenges."

As well, the report says the province hasn't obtained enough financial guarantees to ensure oilsands mines get cleaned up. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Eco damage

The report points out that contaminant levels in the oilsands region remain low.

- **Pollution** However, recent studies strongly suggest that hydrocarbons and heavy metals traceable to industry are showing up in the land and water.
- **Wetlands** Industry has yet to prove it will be able to restore wetlands or tailings ponds.

CEO. Healthy retirement

▶ Former Shaw Communications CEO Jim Shaw in Calgary earlier this year.

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Former Shaw CEO gets big pension bump

Jim Shaw, the former chief executive of Shaw Communications, has been approved for a $500,000 monthly payment to his pension plan by the board of the company, according to reports. Shaw, who retired as CEO last month, will receive $495,833 per month, or $5.95 million annually — exceeding the $5.4-million pension paid annually to his father, J.R. Shaw, the company chairman.

Icahn fights for Lion's share

Lions Gate Entertainment Corp. shareholders have rebuffed the latest challenge from billionaire investor Carl Icahn, rejecting his partial slate of board candidates and electing all 12 put forward by management.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Best Buy settles out of court

The consumer electronics retailer Best Buy Co. Inc. has settled a Connecticut lawsuit that accused it of advertising lower prices on some items on its website than at in-store kiosks, then overcharging customers at the stores.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

New vehicle sales down

According to preliminary industry data from Statistics Canada, the number of new vehicles sold in October edged down 0.3 per cent to 134,427 units as lower truck sales were partially offset by higher sales of passenger cars.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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TIRED OF THE ENTIRE GIVING PROCESS

Just sayin'

PAUL SULLIVAN

At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, I have a theory why charitable donations are down.

There's a new U.S. study showing that charitable donations fell 3.2 per cent in 2009, and wealthy households dried up the most: A whopping 34.9 per cent. You can hear those change purses snapping all the way across the border.

My theory is we're exhausted by the charitable donation industry, and the more money we have, the more exhausted we are.

Wherever we go, whatever we do, there's a hand sticking out in front of our faces.

Seasonal charities: Every carol concert requires you to bring a non-perishable food item.

Charitable panhandlers: Those young men and women with clipboards stationed on every street corner on Earth, cheerfully ambushing you for Greenpeace, the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the World Wildlife Fund, etc.

Call centre charity: You want how much for what?

Rock star charity: Endorsed by Bono.

If you manage to avoid all those opportunities, you turn up at the checkout stand and the clerk asks if you want to add a few bucks for the World Yak Relief Project (WYRP). Hey, I'm in favour of yaks. Just not here. Just not now.

So it's no surprise that in the above-mentioned report, the main reason for the decline is that charities are asking too often and for too much money.

"OK, I admit I'm feeling guilty and sheepish and vile ..."

One altruistic impulse can wed you to a charity for life. Actually, it's easier to get a real divorce than it is to part ways with the WYRP.

If you give to yak relief, it's not long before all the other endangered or even just annoyed animals are calling, spamming, junk-mailing and stalking you for a donation. Tigers 2.0 lurk in the shadows of your in-basket or leap out of your mailbox, and they're just as eager to take a bite out of your hide.

OK, I admit I'm feeling guilty and sheepish and vile, but charities need to understand the accumulated impact of their frenetic campaigning is donor fatigue. If the frequency goes up, the amount goes down, according to Einstein.

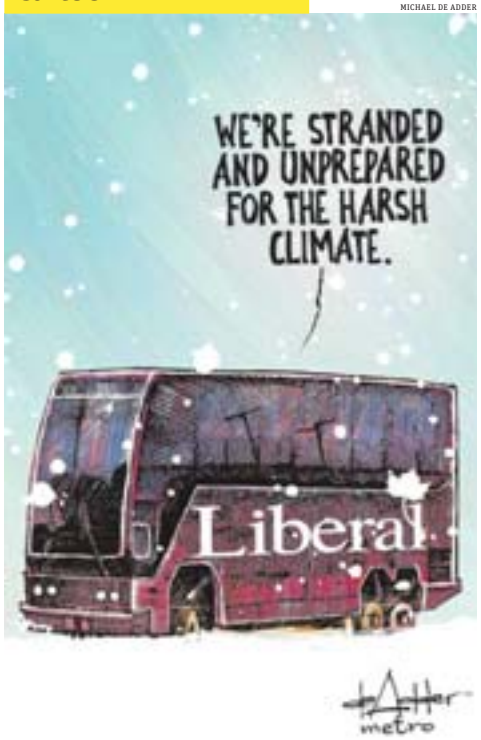
We can't go back to the beginning and start all over again, but this year, I'm thinking of suspending all other donations, finding one little kid who seems particularly needy, and handing him (or her) a pile of cash.

And if it all gets spent on bubble gum and comic books, at least the kid will be happy while it lasts. Can't say the same thing about the yaks.

Read more of Paul Sullivan's columns at metronews.ca/justsaying

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER



Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

Worth mentioning

Bethlehem has seen a record number of tourists this year and its thousands of hotel rooms are fully booked for Christmas week, thanks to steadily declining violence in the West Bank over the past few years.

It's a welcome bit of good news in a period that is otherwise gloomy, with a U.S.-led Israeli-Palestinian peace effort appearing to have run aground.

So far this year, 1.4 million tourists have visited the traditional birthplace of Jesus and 90,000 are expected during the Christmas season, a significant increase over last year, according to Israeli government figures.

The town's 2,750 hotel rooms are booked solid for Christmas week and four more hotels are under construction. The expected turnout for Christmas week is up strongly from about 70,000 last year.

The Bethlehem they find may be different from what many expect: For one thing, Christians have lost their majority: More than two-thirds of the 50,000 Palestinian residents are Muslim.

Still, the town does its best to take advantage of its place in Christian history, going so far as to link the Christmas nativity story to the fact that it houses the West Bank's best maternity facility.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holy Land

TARA TODRAS-WHITEHILL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's your favourite Christmas carol?

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Metro Minute with McLean's free chili

Today is a good day to forget your lunch — especially if you work or are going to be downtown.

Eddie Szasz, executive chef at McLean's restaurant, will be serving his chili at Main and Hastings streets between noon and 2 p.m. today for a free community lunch.

The healthy meal will be served out of his chili wagon.

Szasz said he decided to hold the event to share his food and give back to the community.

McLean's is a casual fine dining restaurant located in Gastown at 200-332 Water St.

Ex-Canucks goaltender Kirk McLean opened the restaurant last July.

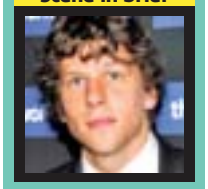
AYAKA KAWAI

CONTRIBUTED

▶ Eddie Szasz, executive chef at McLean's restaurant, will be serving his chili at Main and Hastings streets between noon and 2 p.m. today.

2 scene

Scene in brief



The Social Network has racked up another slew of pre-Oscar awards, this time from the Toronto Film Critics Association, which has crowned it best picture of the year.

The Facebook saga scored five prizes from the critics group, including best director for David Fincher, best actor for Jesse Eisenberg, best supporting actor for Armie Hammer, and best screenplay for Aaron Sorkin.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

For more Golden Globe coverage, scan this code or visit metronews.ca/scene. Learn how to scan on page 3.

The King's Speech leads Golden Globe contenders with seven nominations, including best drama and three acting honours Glee leads TV contenders with five nominations

Jane Lynch is nominated for best supporting actress for her role as Sue Sylvester on Glee.

Colin Firth is up for a best dramatic actor prize for The King's Speech.

Who's up for the 2010 Golden Globes

BEST PICTURE, DRAMA
- Black Swan
- The Fighter
- Inception
- The King's Speech
- The Social Network

BEST PICTURE, MUSICAL/COMEDY
- Alice in Wonderland
- Burlesque
- The Kids Are All Right
- Red
- The Tourist

BEST TV SERIES, MUSICAL/COMEDY
- 30 Rock
- The Big Bang Theory
- The Big C
- Glee
- Modern Family
- Nurse Jackie

BEST TV SERIES, DRAMA
- Boardwalk Empire
- Dexter
- The Good Wife
- Mad Men
- The Walking Dead

BEST ACTOR, TV MUSICAL/COMEDY
- Alec Baldwin, 30 Rock
- Steve Carell, The Office
- Thomas Jane, Hung
- Matthew Morrison, Glee
- Jim Parsons, The Big Bang Theory

BEST ACTRESS, TV MUSICAL/COMEDY
- Toni Collette, The United States of Tara
- Edie Falco, Nurse Jackie
- Tina Fey, 30 Rock
- Laura Linney, The Big C
- Lea Michele, Glee

BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA
- Steve Buscemi, Boardwalk Empire
- Bryan Cranston, Breaking Bad
- Michael C. Hall, Dexter
- Jon Hamm, Mad Men
- Hugh Laurie, House

BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA
- Julianna Margulies, The Good Wife
- Elisabeth Moss, Mad Men
- Piper Perabo, Covert Affairs
- Katey Sagal, Sons of Anarchy
- Kyra Sedgwick, The Closer

BEST ACTOR, DRAMA
- Jesse Eisenberg, The Social Network
- Colin Firth, The King's Speech
- James Franco, 127 Hours
- Ryan Gosling, Blue Valentine
- Mark Wahlberg, The Fighter

BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA
- Halle Berry, Frankie and Alice
- Nicole Kidman, Rabbit Hole
- Jennifer Lawrence, Winter's Bone
- Natalie Portman. Black Swan
- Michelle Williams, Blue Valentine

BEST ACTOR, MUSICAL/COMEDY
- Johnny Depp, Alice in Wonderland
- Johnny Depp, The Tourist
- Paul Giamatti, Barney's Version
- Jake Gyllenhaal, Love and Other Drugs
- Kevin Spacey, Casino Jack

BEST ACTRESS, MUSICAL/COMEDY
- Annette Bening, The Kids Are All Right
- Julianne Moore, The Kids Are All Right
- Anne Hathaway, Love and Other Drugs
- Angelina Jolie, The Tourist
- Emma Stone, Easy A

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Scary Christmas to all, and to all a good fright

Holiday movies aren't all about puppet snowmen ◗ Five of our favourite flicks for a creepy Christmas

With the yuletide near it's time for families to start gathering around the comforting glow of a television to watch films that revel in the mirth of the holiday season.

However, if you can't bear the thought of seeing the Grinch's heart grow three sizes for the 800th time, there is another option.

Why not fill your family's heart with fear this year with a selection of horror films that add a special touch of blood and guts to the Christmas season?

The following titles are guaranteed to make Grandma spit up her eggnog on the big day.

▶ Gremlins: A holiday reminder to always read the instruction manual for your presents.

Black Christmas (1974)
Canadian director Bob Clark is best known for his B.B. gun classic A Christmas Story, but his first attempt to bring the holidays to the big screen was this pioneering slasher classic about a group of sorority girls bumped off over the Christmas break. Swell with national pride as you watch SCTV's Andrea Martin get impaled by an icicle.

Gremlins (1984)
Who would have thought a cute little Mogwai named Gizmo would go down as the worst Christmas gift in history by paralyzing an impossibly perfect small town with pintsized monsters. Perfect for parents trying to dissuade their kids from asking for a new pet for Christmas.

Silent Night, Deadly Night (1984)
There are many movies about killer Santas, but the most famous example is this controversial slasher about a deranged man dressed as Santa murdering promiscuous teens. Parents picketed this film's release in the '80s, but now you can buy it from any video store and share the trashy terror with your entire family.

Jack Frost (1997)
A possessed snowman kills people. 'Nuff said.

Sheitan (2006)
A beautifully deranged French horror flick about an incestuous hillbilly family who kidnap some rowdy young folks to perform a Satanic ritual on Christmas Eve. A heartwarming tale of family torment for you and yours.

PHIL BROWN

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Tonight
8pm - Frosty the Snowman
8:30pm - DISNEY: Mickey's Christmas Carol
CBC

Factor in hate

Will the X Factor show work in the U.S. as people tire of Simon?

YUI MOK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Simon Cowell.

Look out, America. Britain's guilty pleasure, the cheesy X Factor TV show, is crossing the pond.

Will it work? Or is the U.S. public tiring of Simon Cowell-powered TV extravaganzas?

A record audience of nearly 20 million British viewers flocked to the X Factor Sunday night finale, which awarded a $1.6 million recording contract to painter Matt Cardle, heretofore unknown beyond his immediate circle of friends.

The British experience suggests the headline-grabbing, rags-to-riches show may be a smash in the United States when it debuts next year, even if it's got some strong similarities to the popular but waning American Idol.

Cardle launched the first day of his new life Monday, embarking on a publicity blitz to try to drive his debut single, When We Collide, to become No. 1 on the British Christmas charts.

"Nothing can prepare you for the nerves and the fear of the first live show," Cardle told The Associated Press. "You're playing to 20 million people. You can't picture it. They're hidden but you know they're there, their eyes pouring in on you."

That lucrative spot has in recent years tended to go to the X Factor winner, but last year went instead to Rage Against the Machine, boosted by an anti-X Factor, movement on Facebook.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's not over until ...

There was no singing But thousands did flock to watch Oprah film shows for final series outside Sydney Opera House Shows start in Jan.

For a few hours, Sydney swapped opera for a little Oprah.

Thousands of shrieking, jubilant fans flocked to the Sydney Opera House on Tuesday to watch TV talk show queen Oprah Winfrey tape two star-studded shows for her final series.

There were celebrities, giveaways and screams-a-plenty as 6,000 Oprah devotees jammed the steps of the landmark arts centre in Australia's biggest city for the filming. The production marked the finale of her weeklong trip, accompanied by 302 U.S. audience members who took part in Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure.

Winfrey's staffers whipped the already frenzied crowd into a tear-drenched state of hysteria before the host ascended the stage to the sounds of Men At Work's Down Under, Australia's unofficial anthem.

"HELLOOOO AUSTRALIAAAAA!" she bellowed as the audience's roar reached a deafening pitch. "Now I understand why you call Australia 'Oz,' 'cause we truly are at the end of the yellow brick road!"

Winfrey launched her 25th and final season of The Oprah Winfrey Show in September by surprising her audience with her ultimate giveaway: an eight-day trip to Australia. For the past week, the lucky chosen have been travelling the continent — snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef, surfing at Sydney's famous Bondi Beach and exploring the rugged Outback.

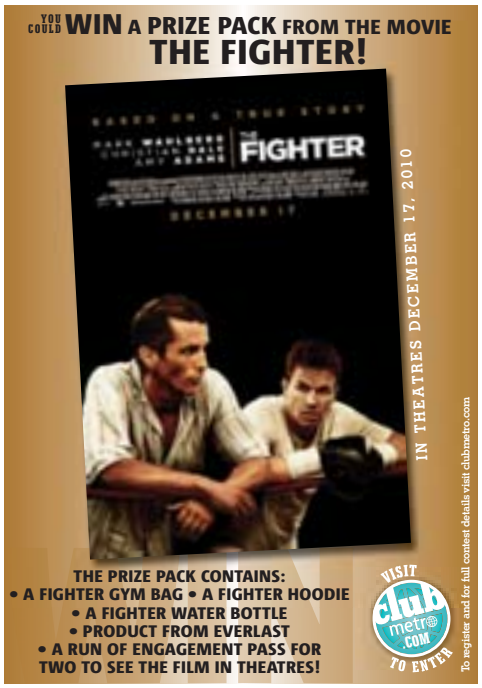
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oprah Winfrey, left, poses with actor Russell Crowe while sailing on Sydney Harbour.

Off to Oz

When you can watch:

- **On television** Four shows from Winfrey's Aussie adventure will screen in January and are expected to be watched by millions of people in 145 countries.
- **First guest** Her first guest was Australian actor Russell Crowe.
- **Another guest** During the taping of the second episode, actor Hugh Jackman hurt his eye while rappelling from the top of the Opera House onto the stage.
- **Locals upset** The state and federal governments have spent around $5 million on the trip, a price that has drawn criticism from some Australians. But officials and Winfrey herself insist the shows will bring many millions more in tourism publicity.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4151 Hazelbridge Way, Unit 1030
(Aberdeen Mall)
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10320 - 152nd St, Unit 55
10153 King George Hwy
(Central City)

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88 West Pender St (Tinseltown)

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Scarlett, Ryan split: Reports

- Reynolds recently became the first Canadian to snag People magazine's 'sexiest man alive' title
- Johansson was named GQ's 2010 'babe of the year'

Reports say that Canadian leading man Ryan Reynolds and his bombshell wife, Scarlett Johansson, have separated.

The Hollywood power couple married in September 2008 in a private ceremony at a remote British Columbia resort.

The gossip website TMZ features a short entry stating the duo are living apart and that "it's amicable."

Meanwhile, a source close to the couple tells Us Weekly that Johansson initiated the split about two weeks ago and that the couple have decided to end their marriage.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Scarlett Johansson

Girls, start your engines: Zac's single

High School Musical co-stars Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens have called it quits after four years together, according to Gossip Cop.

The split was "amicable" and came about once the pair acknowledged their relationship "wasn't going to go further."

When asked by Details earlier this year about being in a relationship, Efron said, "Believe me, I wrack my brain thinking, 'Why am I not out there playing the field?' One of my buddies was like, 'You have no idea what's going on right now. You're peaking on Ecstasy and you're watching TV.' But it's not in my heart." METRO

▶ Zac Efron

Miley's antics have Dr. Drew concerned

After a video showing Miley Cyrus smoking a bong hit the Internet, Dr. Drew Pinsky is worried about the Disney star, he tells Access Hollywood.

"We know that she's going to be acting out now because her family's in trouble, so it's not unusual to see depression manifesting as various kinds of acting out behaviours," Pinsky says.

"If I had a child that was doing that or if I was advising a parent, I would say get professional help immediately." METRO

▶ Dr. Drew Pinsky

Celebrity tweets

50 Cent [@50cent] Why people keep saying I got jungle fever. I ain't never even kissed a white women. Lol

Russell Brand [@rusty rockets] Today I am 8 years clean.

Sarah Silverman [@SarahK Silverman] Its gross when someone says they're starving but they have food in their teeth

Kathy Griffin [@kathy griffin] Today I am on my way to Palm Springs to do 2 shows tomorrow. Hmm I wonder if there are any gay people there?

Pitt's kids rule the set

Keith Middlebrook, who co-stars with Brad Pitt in Moneyball, says it was clear who was in charge of the set: Pitt's six kids.

"There were toys and there were kids everywhere," Middlebrook tells Us Weekly. METRO

Christmastime in the United States

Heading south for the holidays? If so, there are plenty of great places to visit to get you in the holiday spirit, from lighting festivals to Cinderella's Castle

FLICKER: MESHMAR2

Walt Disney World
Orlando, Florida

At Walt Disney World in Orlando, it's Christmas through Jan. 3. Cinderella's Castle is lit up with 200,000 white lights and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party, a ticketed event certain evenings through Dec. 19, features twice-nightly Christmas parades plus live shows, carollers and more.

Other holiday happenings include a "Holidays Around the World" showcase at Epcot through Dec. 30, where storytellers share their heritage. Epcot also hosts a daily gospel performance through Dec. 26, and the Candlelight Processional featuring a choir, orchestra and a celebrity narrator retelling the Christmas story, through Dec. 30.

HANDOUT

Mission Inn Hotel & Spa
Riverside, California

The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, at 3649 Mission Inn Ave., is hosting its annual festival of lights through Jan. 2.

Visitors will find a dazzling 3.5 million lights, a tree, carollers, and animatronic elves, angels and other characters in 17th-century costumes. The display is free and open to the public; the hotel also has holiday overnight packages starting at $199.

The festival spills out into the city of Riverside with lights and decorations all over town as well as an outdoor skating rink in the main street pedestrian mall near the historic hotel.

For more details visit missioninn.com.

HANDOUT

Universal Studios
Hollywood, California

At Universal Studios, cast members from Glee and other celebrities will read Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas and take part in nightly lightings of a Grinchmas tree, beginning Dec. 11 and 12 and continuing daily Dec. 18 through Jan. 2.

The celebration includes a field of snow where families can build snowmen, as well as visits to the set where the Grinch movie was filmed aboard Universal's Studio Tour, and photo ops with the Grinch and his dog, Max. Tickets, packages and hotel deals at universalstudioshollywood.com or universalorlando.com.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Biltmore House
Asheville, North Carolina

In North Carolina, the historic Biltmore House is celebrating Christmas through Jan. 2 with 150,000 lights, carollers, holiday cooking and decorating demonstrations, wine-tastings and a lit-up 17-metre Norway spruce on the front lawn.

Biltmore's original owner, George Vanderbilt, first opened the home to friends and family on Christmas Eve 1895 for what became an annual Christmas Party. Biltmore recalls the era with Candlelight Christmas Evenings featuring performances by ballroom dancers in vintage costumes and choirs. Details at biltmore.com.

HANDOUT

Galt House Hotel
Louisville, Kentucky

A brand-new attraction called KaLightoscope opened this season in Louisville, Ky., at the Galt House Hotel on 140 N. Fourth St.

The walk-through pavilion of lighted holiday sculptures is divided into 12 holiday-themed sections including "Toyland," the "Christmas Tree Maze," "The Lighted Forest," and "The Nativity" among others.

The attraction is open through Jan. 3; tickets are from $14.95 to $17.95. Details at KaLightoscope.com. Other holiday offerings at the hotel include a Christmas dinner show and events with Santa in a life-size gingerbread village.

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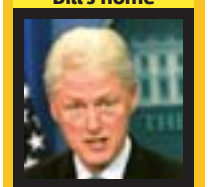
3 life

Bill's home



The home in Hope where Bill Clinton spent the first four years of his life will officially be a national historic site as of Jan. 2.

Organizers worked for years to earn the status for the Clinton First Home Museum on Hervey Street. More than 80,000 visitors from 159 countries have toured the two-storey, wood-frame home since it opened as a museum in 1997.

The museum won approval last year to become part of the National Park Service.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

History of Montreal's Ste-Catherine Street on display in museum exhibit

Las Vegas gets a new hot spot

U.S. recession has hurt sin city, but new hotel Cosmopolitan hopes things will be turning around

The last major Las Vegas resort approved before the Great Recession will have to lure thousands of gamblers from established neighbours to survive after it opens today.

The $3.9-billion US Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, built by a German investment bank after its original developer defaulted, may have the hippest-ever TV commercials: Over a garage-rock soundtrack with a jazzy interlude, guests with crafty smiles stray across a landscape of shiny dance floors, soothing guest rooms and tables laden with food and drink.

But the 2,995-room Cosmopolitan is entering a market that's struggling. And analysts say that just to cover its debt, it will need to do better than even the top-performing Bellagio, its neighbour to the north with 3,933 rooms and the same amount of casino space as Cosmopolitan.

"If you take a look at everything that's opened in recent years, these properties have all struggled out of the gate," said Bill Lerner, an analyst with Union Gaming Group. "I'm not sure why this will be different."

Tourism to Las Vegas has increased from the woeful days of 2008 and 2009. And Lerner says the Cosmopolitan will get significant help from being owned by Deutsche Bank, which gave the project far lower interest rates and better terms than usual for commercial loans.

The Cosmopolitan's insides are designed to make people gawk. Video-screen columns cycling moving art greet visitors in the lobby. Across the resort, guests can sip cocktails inside a three-storey chandelier. And its 13 restaurants (including an unmarked pizza joint) will offer world-class cuisine to please any New York foodie. But the Cosmopolitan's biggest trump on the competition might be its rooms, most of which offer spacious terraces with incomparable views of Las Vegas. Most were planned as condominiums — big and with kitchenettes.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISAAC BREKKEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ The Cosmopolitan, the newest resort in Las Vegas, has 2,995 rooms and cost $3.9 billion US to build.

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Revelstoke raises the bar pretty high

THE TRAVELLIN' CANADIAN

DARREN PARKMAN
TRAVEL@METRONEWS.CA

Whistler may get all the glory in the wake of the Winter Olympics, but there's a new kid in town when it comes to world class skiing and boarding in British Columbia.

About 600 kilometres southeast of Vancouver, lies unassuming little Revelstoke, and the all new Revelstoke Mountain resort on Mount Mackenzie. Here you'll find some seriously rad skiing and boarding.

Since opening just three years ago in late 2007, Revelstoke continues to attract more and more hardcore adventurers with the highest lift-serviced vertical in North America, and it's the only resort in the world to offer gondola, cat-skiing, and heli-skiing together in one place.

At its peak, the mountain receives an average of 1,200 centimetres of snow a year, which is 20 per cent more than Whistler. The price tag to create all this fun is estimated at about a billion dollars, but when the resort is finished over the next decade, it's expected to be more than 10,000 acres, making it the biggest in North America.

After a hard day on the slopes, it's always great to unwind in nearby charming downtown Revelstoke. Now, this little town doesn't quite have that trendy upscale Alpine Village feel of Whistler, but the drinks are cold and the people are friendly.

FLICKR: A TEA BUT NO E

▶ The Revelstoke Mountain Resort in southeastern British Columbia is expected to be more than 10,000 acres when completed, making it the biggest ski resort in North America.

I found myself trying my very first "ski-shooter" at Grizzly's bar downtown. This is where a bunch of like-minded patrons drink simultaneous shots from shot glasses mounted to a snowboard. How cool is that?

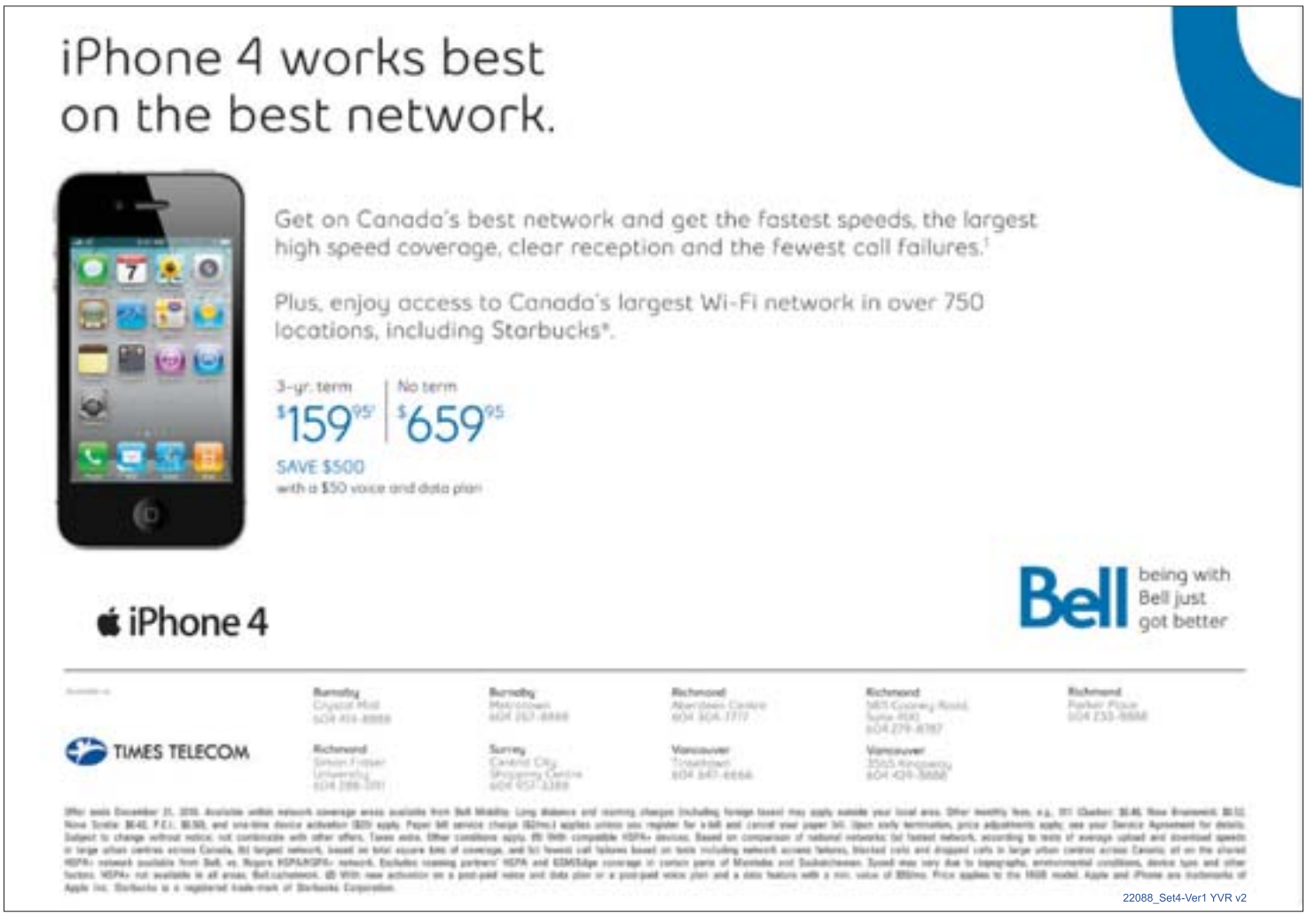
Revelstoke Mountain may not be on every skier's radar just yet, but with future plans to build as many as 25 lifts, it just might be the next Whistler!

A break from the slopes

Take a Snowmobile Tour of Boulder Mountain:
You don't have to be experienced to join a skidoo trail ride up the mountain. Explore the alpine terrain and check out wildlife up close from winter right through May.

Enjoy a Helicopter Glacier Tour:
Experience a thrilling flight over top glaciers, jagged mountain peaks, and alpine lakes. More adventurous types can even land for a heli-hiking tour.

DARREN PARKMAN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Slow & steady for a quick meal

Spare 15 minutes a few hours before you serve dinner to create this effortless pomegranate-rosemary brisket

Sometimes, low and slow is the best way to deal with a dinner short on time.

Even if dinner takes several hours to cook, but you don't need to do anything to the food during that time, it might as well be a 20-minute meal.

That was the inspiration for this bold, rich roasted brisket with red wine jus.

You start by bashing together fresh rosemary, garlic, salt and black peppercorns. The blend is rubbed over a brisket.

The meat is surrounded by mushroom caps, a quartered onion and a quartered pomegranate. Pop it in the oven and walk away.

When the brisket is done, you set it onto a plate to rest, spoon the mushrooms around it, then strain the liquid in the pot. And that's about it. The pomegranate breaks down during cooking, lending a tart-sweet flavour that complements the salty flavour of the meat. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LARRY CROWE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ This bold and rich roasted brisket is made with mushrooms, onions and pomegranate.

Pomegranate-Rosemary Brisket with Red Wine Jus

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 150 C (300 F). Drizzle oil over bottom of a Dutch oven.
2. Using a mortar and peselte, spice grinder or small food prosessor, grind together salt, peppercorns, rosemary and garlic until they form a coarse paste.
3. Rub rosemary-garlic blend over bisket, then place meat in Dutch oven. Scatter mushrooms, onion and pomegrnate around meat, then pour wine down side. Cover pot and roast for 2 to 2 1/2 hours or until meat is fork tender.
4. Transfer brisket from pot to a serving platter. Use a slotted spoon to transfer mushrooms to platter. Cover with foil and set aside.
5. Pour liquid in pot through a mesh strainer into a bowl. Discard solids. Return strained liquid to pot and set over medium-high. Simmer until reduced and thickened, about 10 minutes. Serve alongside meat and mushrooms.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients:

- 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) kosher salt
- 7 ml (1/2 tbsp) whole peppercorns
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, leaves only
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 kg (2 1/4 lbs) brisket, trimmed of fat
- 250 g (8 oz) baby portobello mushrooms
- 1 medium yellow onion, quartered
- 1 pomegranate, quartered
- 250 ml (1 cup) red wine

Warm up with a spicy beef dish

With its array of spices, Afghan rice and meat is an ideal way to heat up a cold day

Ingredients:

- 500 g (1 lb) top sirloin, cubed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each tumeric, cardamom, cumin, red pepper flakes and salt
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) each cinnamon and nutmeg
- 60 ml (4 tbsp) oil, divided
- 500 ml (2 cups) julienned carrots
- 250 ml (1 cup) finely chopped onion
- 250 ml (1 cup) basmati rice
- 250 (1 cup) beef broth
- 250 ml (1 cup) water
- Garniches: fresh cilantro sprigs, toasted pine nuts

Preparation:

1. In a bowl, combine beef, garlic, tumeric, cardamom, cumin, red pepper flakes, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and 30 ml (2 tbsp) of the oil. Stir until well combined and the beef is evenly coated. Let sit for 30 minutes at room temperature or covered in the refrigerator for up to 1 day.
2. In a large, deep skillet, heat 15 ml (1 tbsp) of the oil over medium-high heat. Brown beef on all sides; toss in carrots and cook for 1 minute. Transfer to a plate.
3. Add remaining oil to skillet and saute onion until golden. Add rice, stirring until coated with oil and starting to crackle, about 1 minute. Pour in beef broth and water.
4. Bring to boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until all the liquid has been absorbed. Stir in beef and carrot mixture.
5. Let the dish sit for 10 minutes before serving, sprinkled with cilantro and pine nuts, if using.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The winning formula

Do you slip back into old habits post-New Year's? Forge ahead with these simple rules for setting a goal

Mark Murphy shares the key to resolution success in his book Hard Goals.

ADRIANA RIVERA
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

According to Mark Murphy, author of Hard Goals: The Secrets to Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be, "85 per cent of New Year's resolutions are abandoned within 90 days of New Year's."

For 2011, Murphy shows you how to stick with your goals by using some basic rules. He breaks them down into four subgroups: heartfelt, animated, required and difficult.

"A goal has to be heartfelt — you have to have some emotional connection to it. It has to be animated, in that we have to visualize it in our minds. Required means we need to feel some kind of urgency for it. And it has to be difficult, as we perform best when our brains are most awake," he explains.

These four categories add up to the most important goal, what Murphy describes as a "hard goal." These goals are highly achievable and keep a goal-setter motivated.

"The interesting thing is that too often people view goal-setting as a one-shot endeavor," Murphy says. "You set the goal, you forget about it and you expect it to take care of itself. How we feel when we initially start a goal; that motivation can wane."

Murphy also says that setting goals effectively can create happiness, or at least a more positive point of view. "Most people who are great achievers, once they hit a goal, they're always looking for a new goal," he says.

"We found that people who tend to be the happiest are people who keep goals coming."

His advice: "Lay down the foundation by finding a goal that you want to do and find an emotional connection to that goal.

"You have to find some reason that you care about it."

Workplace Law

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IS AN EMPLOYMENT LAWYER WITH WHITTEN & LUBLIN LLP.
DAN@CANADAEMPLOYMENTLAWYER.COM

Fighting for family time a tricky affair

Who wins in the tug-of-war between work obligations and unique family circumstances?

At the end of the day someone has to pick up the kids — plain and simple.

But what happens if your employer changes a term or condition of your employment that prevents you from doing so?

It's irritating, sure, but is it discrimination?

Human rights legislation suggests it might be.

In almost every single province, employers are prohibited from discriminating against their employees on the basis of "family status", which is generally defined as being in a parent and child relationship.

However, this is a developing area of law, and currently balancing an employer's right to govern the workplace with an employee's parental obligations is an ongoing power struggle.

Employers expect employees to show up regularly and perform the duties and responsibilities of their position.

Further, employers can set hours of work and schedule shifts.

Family status issues arise when the employer changes a condition of employment which causes serious interference with an employee's parental obligations.

In these cases, an employee may require accommodation.

That said, not all workplace changes will result in discrimination and the need for accommodation.

The "test" is a change which causes interference with a parental obligation outside the scope of ordinary child care requirements.

Examples include an employee who required specific post-natal scheduling changes and an employee whose child had a medical condition which necessitated special after-school care.

Conversely, discrimination has not be found where an employee was unable to relocate to a new job site due to a complex custody arrangement, where there were other reasonable child care alternatives available, or where the employer's change prevented an employee from attending his or her's child's extra-curricular activities.

If an employee requests accommodation based on family status, employers should ask what special circumstances exist, provide no more than the minimum amount of time off, and remind the employee that this time off is unpaid.

An employee who requests accommodation must be mindful that that accommodation will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

And these extraordinary circumstances do not include attending your child's hockey games.

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Photo provided by Cypress Mountain

Anna Wintour in the making?

- Four-year-old Daniela Smith likes Cinderella, soccer and Prada
- The schoolgirl picks and reviews the spring/summer 2011 collections

KENYA HUNT
STYLE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

Bright yellow jumpsuits, crazy orange wigs, tops with images of cheeky monkeys, and some over-sized flowers... You'd be forgiven for thinking that some of the dominant looks from spring/summer '11 could have sprung out of a kids' cartoon. It's no wonder that our resident four-year-old critic had such strong opinions about them all.

MWN

▶ Smith & Hunt

CATWALKING.COM

Prada

"It looks like she has dressed up for a movie. She looks like she could be one of the wicked sisters in Cinderella. I don't like her hair. I think her shirt would look better with elephants and horsies instead of monkeys. But I like stripes on her skirt. I would wear this outside to play. But I would wear the whole outfit to the theater."

CATWALKING.COM

Ralph Lauren

"This is a good outfit to wear to feed the horsies. I think she has ponies and horsies and rabbits. Her trousers look nice. And her jacket does too. I think she carries a lot of things inside her bag like a telephone, hand cream, pen, paper and a pistol. She has a pistol and a magic wand because she's got special powers."

CATWALKING.COM

Junya Watanabe

"I'd wear this to school and my classmates would probably say, 'This looks really silly.' And then I probably wouldn't wear it to school again. This lady looks like she's going to the opera, where she's going to talk to everybody. She looks talkative even though her mouth is covered. I like how the face mask shows her hair more. I like coloured hair."

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To group or to stream students

Research: Grouping students by academic abilities may be detrimental

Students placed in mixed ability groups tend to see greater academic success than students placed in low ability groups.

"Grouping" by ability, or "tracking" or "streaming" means that students are placed into groups defined by their ability levels.

Students may be grouped by ability either for a subject (for example for mathematics or reading) or for all or almost all their instruction.

Students' assignment to an ability group may be temporary, changing during the year, or relatively permanent.

Advocates of grouping by ability claim that it can raise achievement standards, since teachers can target their instruction and use resources more effectively.

However, research has shown that grouping by ability can have adverse effects on students' attitudes toward schooling and their self-esteem.

Studies on ability grouping show inequitable outcomes and social consequences.

• It is very difficult to distinguish "ability" from "prior achievement."

• Use of grouping by ability is associated with worse overall student performance.

• Students placed in higher ability groups may perform better but students placed in lower ability groups typically perform worse than in mixed ability groups.

• There is a tendency for lower teacher expectation and lower quality of instruction in lower ability groups.

• For students assigned to low-ability groups, there are negative effects on their self-esteem, motivation and attitudes toward schooling.

Research suggests that students in non-grouped settings, especially for those with lower achievement, have more healthy and positive attitudes toward school than students tend to have in grouped settings.

Researchers advocate using mixed grouping as well as reducing ability grouping in schools, but more important is to focus much attention on improving instruction and curriculum for students of all achievement levels.

COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (CEA) AND THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (OISE/UT)

More details

There are numerous online resources available regarding grouping by ability as well as research references that inform this issue

For more information go to cea-ace.ca.

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4 sports

Opinion

RORY BOYLEN
THE HOCKEY NEWS

NHL'S IRON MEN GO TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE BEST

If you're a baseball fan, you'll know all about Cal Ripken Jr.'s iron-man record in which he played 2,632 consecutive games from May 30, 1982 to Sept. 19, 1998.

If you're a football fan, you'll know Brett Favre's iron-man streak just came to an end Monday when he was finally forced to watch a game from the sidelines after starting 297 consecutive games from 1992-2010.

In hockey, the long-standing iron man is Chicago goalie Glenn Hall, whose amazing stand of 502 (551 including playoffs) consecutive games is made even more spectacular by the fact he was a goaltender in an era when masks weren't part of the uniform.

The NHL's active iron man is Calgary defenceman Jay Bouwmeester, who is sitting at 455 consecutive games. He plays well more than 20 minutes per game and has led his teams in ice time each season since the lockout.

That brings us to Henrik Sedin, who is quietly leaving his own mark. The defending Hart Trophy winner is 10 behind Bouwmeester at 445, having suited up for every game since March 21, 2004 — 15 days after Bouweester's streak started.

Unlike baseball, hockey is an aggressive, physical sport that wears down even the fittest bodies and all but guarantees at least one injury per season. Unlike football, the hockey season goes on all winter long and games are played at least twice per week and often more than that. It's impossible to conclude which sport's iron-man streak is most impressive and it's foolish to write off one as less important than another.

But while absolutely nothing can be taken away from Bouwmeester's and Sedin's current run of invincibility, it's hard to deny just how otherworldly Hall's mark is.

Think of the countless pucks to the face, the number of stitches, and the ability to come back for more each and every game. Hall used to make himself throw up before each game to calm his nerves — needless to say, Bouwmeester and Sedin don't go through the same ritual.

Players are bigger, stronger and harder on the puck than they were in Hall's day, but the NHL was a rougher place back in the 1950s and '60s and the fact no one has surpassed the mark in 48 years is a testament to Hall's achievement.

While Bouwmeester could pass the mark this season if he stays healthy, Sedin won't be able to pass Hall until early in the 2011-12 season.

But it's a long haul to get that far and, if he does get there, it will still take quite a few more before Hall's mark is forgotten.

Quoted

"there's a chance that we're going to be able to get him back at some point. Hopefully, this week."
VIKINGS INTERIM COACH LESLIE FRAZIER, ON WHETHER BRETT FAVRE WILL PLAY AGAIN.

Edmonton. Not much to cheer about

▶ Last night's game marked the debut of Edmonton's cheer team, the Octane. They are the first cheerleaders for an NHL team based in Canada.

JOHN ULAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

At least someone looked good in an Oilers jersey last night

Kris Versteeg had a goal and an assist as the Toronto Maple Leafs kicked off their Western Canada road trip with a 4-1 victory over the Edmonton Oilers yesterday. Dion Phaneuf, Mikhail Grabovski and Phil Kessel also scored for the Leafs (12-14-4), who have won two in a row and four of their last six — moving them into a three-way tie for 10th in the Eastern Conference with Buffalo and Carolina. Jordan Eberle scored in response for the Oilers (11-14-5), who have lost two in a row and three of four to remain in last place in the West.

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Philadelphia	32	20	7	2	3	108	78	45	11-5-0-2	9-2-2-1	6-1-0-3	W3
d-Washington	32	18	11	1	2	98	92	39	12-4-0-2	6-7-1-0	4-5-0-1	L6
d-Montreal	30	18	10	2	0	78	61	38	11-4-2-0	7-6-0-0	5-4-1-0	L2
Pittsburgh	32	21	9	2	0	103	74	44	10-5-1-0	11-4-1-0	9-1-0-0	L1
Atlanta	31	17	11	1	2	99	91	37	9-6-0-1	8-5-1-1	8-2-0-0	W2
NY Rangers	32	18	13	1	0	96	83	37	7-8-1-0	11-5-0-0	6-4-0-0	W1
Boston	28	16	8	1	3	81	56	36	7-5-1-2	9-3-0-1	5-3-1-1	L1
Tampa Bay	30	16	10	2	2	94	106	36	7-2-1-1	9-8-1-1	6-2-0-2	W1
Ottawa	32	13	16	2	1	71	96	29	8-8-1-1	5-8-1-0	3-5-1-1	L1
Carolina	28	12	12	0	4	78	87	28	6-5-0-1	6-7-0-3	3-3-0-4	W1
Buffalo	30	12	14	4	0	78	84	28	6-9-1-0	6-5-3-0	5-4-1-0	L1
Toronto	30	12	14	2	2	69	87	28	8-6-2-1	4-8-0-1	4-5-1-0	W2
Florida	28	13	15	0	0	71	72	26	6-5-0-0	7-10-0-0	3-7-0-0	L1
New Jersey	29	8	19	1	1	53	88	18	4-7-1-1	4-12-0-0	3-7-0-0	L5
NY Islanders	28	5	18	3	2	59	98	15	3-7-1-1	2-11-2-1	1-7-2-0	L6

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OTL	SL	GF	GA	Pts	Home	Away	Last 10	Strk
d-Detroit	29	19	7	2	1	96	78	41	11-4-1-1	8-3-1-0	6-3-1-0	L1
d-Dallas	30	18	10	0	2	86	82	38	11-3-0-1	7-7-0-1	7-2-0-1	W1
d-Vancouver	28	16	8	2	2	91	74	36	9-3-1-1	7-5-1-1	6-3-1-0	W1
Nashville	29	15	8	4	2	76	70	36	7-1-3-2	8-7-1-0	6-1-1-2	W3
Colorado	30	16	10	4	0	108	95	36	8-4-1-0	8-6-3-0	4-3-3-0	W3
Anaheim	33	16	13	2	2	87	98	36	11-6-0-1	5-7-2-1	6-3-0-1	W2
Los Angeles	28	17	10	1	0	78	65	35	11-2-1-0	6-8-0-0	5-4-1-0	W1
San Jose	30	15	10	4	1	90	87	35	8-4-2-1	7-6-2-0	5-4-0-1	L1
Chicago	32	16	13	2	1	101	96	35	8-8-0-0	8-5-2-1	6-3-1-0	L2
Phoenix	28	14	8	4	2	81	77	34	6-4-2-2	8-4-2-0	6-3-0-1	W1
Columbus	29	16	11	1	1	76	79	34	8-7-0-1	8-4-1-0	3-5-1-1	L1
St. Louis	28	14	9	2	3	72	75	33	9-2-0-2	5-7-2-1	4-4-1-1	L1
Minnesota	29	13	12	1	3	71	86	30	7-6-0-2	6-6-1-1	4-4-1-1	L1
Calgary	31	13	15	1	2	84	19	29	8-6-0-0	5-9-1-2	5-4-0-1	W1
Edmonton	30	11	14	1	4	78	105	27	5-8-1-1	6-6-1-2	6-3-0-1	L2

d — division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points; a team winning in overtime or shootout is credited with two points and a victory in the W column; the team losing in overtime or shootout receives one point which is registered in the OTL (overtime loss) or SL (shootout loss) column.

Last night's results
Philadelphia 3 Pittsburgh 2
Toronto 4 Edmonton 1
Monday's results
Calgary 3 Columbus 2 (OT)
Atlanta 4 Ottawa 3 (OT)
Colorado 7 Chicago 5
Dallas 3 San Jose 2 (SO)
Los Angeles 5 Detroit 0
Nashville 5 N.Y. Islanders 0
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
Boston at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Anaheim at Washington, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Carolina at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
San Jose at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Colorado at Chicago, 8:30 p.m.
Columbus at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

LEAFS 4, OILERS 1

First Period
1. Toronto, Phaneuf 1 (Kessel, Armstrong) 5:55
2. Edmonton, Eberle 7 (Gagner, Whitney) 11:45
Penalty — Armstrong Tor (roughing) 2:01.
Second Period
3. Toronto, Grabovski 9 (MacArthur, Lebda) 8:28 (pp)
4. Toronto, Versteeg 10 (Schenn, Brent) 17:38
Penalties — Brule Edm (elbowing) 2:42, Stortini Edm (kneeing) 6:38, Orr Tor, Stortini Edm (fighting) 12:19, MacIntyre Edm (roughing) 12:29, Edmonton bench (too many men; served by Brule) 14:40.
Third Period
5. Toronto, Kessel 12 (Versteeg, Bozak) 9:47 (pp)
Penalties — Phaneuf Tor (unsportsmanlike conduct) 6:16, Paajarvi Edm (holding) 8:49, Orr Tor, MacIntyre Edm (misconduct) 11:35, Versteeg Tor (elbowing) 15:36, Toronto bench (too many men; served by Kessel) 19:30.
Shots

Toronto	12	13	9	34
Edmonton	12	3	9	24

Goal — Toronto: Giguere (W,8-6-2); Edmonton: Khabibulin (L,7-11-2). **Power plays (goals-chances)** — Toronto: 2-5; Edmonton: 0-4.
Att. — 16,839 (16,839) at Edmonton.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	PT
Crosby, Pgh	26	27	53
Stamkos, TB	24	20	44
St. Louis, TB	11	26	37
D.Sedin, Vcr	16	20	36
Ovechkin, Wash	12	24	36
Datsyuk, Det	11	25	36
Perry, Ana	16	19	35
H.Sedin, Vcr	5	30	35
B.Richards, Dal	12	22	34
Semin, Wash	18	15	33
Backstrom, Wash	11	22	33
Byfuglien, Atl	11	21	32
Getzlaf, Ana	10	22	32
Sharp, Chi	17	14	31
P.Stastny, Col	13	18	31
Hejduk, Col	11	20	31
Duchene, Col	11	19	30
M.Richards, Pha	11	19	30
Giroux, Pha	15	14	29
Iginla, Cal	14	15	29
Heatley, SJ	13	16	29
Kopitar, LA	13	16	29
Ladd, Atl	10	19	29
Zetterberg, Det	10	19	29
Clowe, SJ	9	20	29
Roy, Buf	9	20	29
Neal, Dal	13	15	28
Toews, Chi	13	15	28
Eriksson, Dal	12	16	28
E.Staal, Car	12	16	28
Selanne, Ana	10	18	28
Dubinsky, NYR	14	13	27
P.Kane, Chi	11	16	27
J.Williams, LA	10	17	27
Havlat, Minn	7	20	27
J.Thornton, SJ	7	20	27
Letang, Pgh	5	22	27
Lucic, Bos	15	11	26
Ryan, Ana	14	12	26
Plekanec, Mtl	9	17	26
Liles, Col	5	21	26
Nash, Clb	17	8	25
Vanek, Buf	13	12	25
C.Stewart, Col	11	14	25
M.Koivu, Minn	6	19	25
Ribeiro, Dal	5	20	25

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Boston	19	4	.826	—
d-Miami	18	8	.692	2½
d-Chicago	15	8	.652	4
New York	16	9	.640	4
Orlando	16	9	.640	4
Atlanta	16	10	.615	4½
Indiana	11	12	.478	8
Milwaukee	10	13	.435	9
Charlotte	9	15	.375	10½
Philadelphia	9	15	.375	10½
Toronto	9	16	.360	11
Detroit	8	18	.308	12½
Cleveland	7	17	.292	12½
Washington	6	17	.261	13
New Jersey	6	19	.240	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	20	3	.870	—
Dallas	19	5	.792	1½
d-L.A. Lakers	18	7	.720	3
d-Utah	18	8	.692	3½
Oklahoma City	17	8	.680	4
Denver	15	9	.625	5½
New Orleans	14	10	.583	6½
Portland	12	13	.480	9
Phoenix	11	12	.478	9
Memphis	11	14	.440	10
Houston	10	14	.417	10½
Golden State	9	16	.360	12
Minnesota	6	19	.240	15
Sacramento	5	17	.227	14½
L.A. Clippers	5	20	.200	16

d-division leader
Last night's results
Charlotte 97 Toronto 91
Philadelphia 82 New Jersey 77
L.A. Lakers 103 Washington 89
Detroit 103 Atlanta 80
Houston 118 Sacramento 105
Denver 111 Orlando 94
Golden State 108 Minnesota 99
Monday's results
Miami 96, New Orleans 84
Chicago 92, Indiana 73
Memphis 86, Portland 73
Milwaukee 103, Dallas 99
Utah 108, Golden State 95
Tonight's games
(All times Eastern)
L.A. Lakers at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Boston at New York, 7 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Cleveland at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Sacramento at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Houston at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Milwaukee at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Portland at Dallas, 9:30 p.m.

BOBCATS 97, RAPTORS 91

TORONTO (91)
Weems 4-13 0-0 9, Johnson 5-9 2-4 12, Bargnani 4-14 3-5 12, Bayless 6-14 3-4 17, DeRozan 7-14 0-3 14, Davis 3-5 0-0 6, Barbosa 4-11 1-2 12, Kleiza 3-9 2-3 9, Wright 0-0 0-0 0, Dorsey 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-89 11-21 91.
CHARLOTTE (97)
Wallace 5-7 6-10 16, Diaw 4-10 1-2 9, Mohammed 8-11 2-5 18, Augustin 4-12 3-4 12, Jackson 3-8 1-2 7, Thomas 6-12 2-3 14, K.Brown 5-8 0-0 10, Livingston 2-3 2-2 6, McGuire 0-1 0-0 0, Henderson 0-1 0-0 0, Carroll 2-2 1-1 5, D.Brown 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 39-75 18-29 97.

Toronto	29	24	19	19	91
Charlotte	20	27	25	25	97

3-Point Goals—Toronto 8-26 (Barbosa 3-7, Bayless 2-5, Weems 1-3, Kleiza 1-4, Bargnani 1-4, DeRozan 0-3), Charlotte 1-6 (Augustin 1-2, Jackson 0-2, Diaw 0-2). Fouled Out—Jackson. Rebounds—Toronto 52 (Johnson 12), Charlotte 58 (Mohammed 8). Assists—Toronto 21 (Bayless 9), Charlotte 24 (Augustin 7). Total Fouls—Toronto 23, Charlotte 21. Technicals—Jackson. A—12,482 (19,077) at Charlotte, N.C.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE
DETROIT TIGERS—Released RHP Alfredo Figaro and sold his contract to Orix (Japanese Pacific League).
NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with RHP Mariano Rivera on a two-year contract.
OAKLAND ATHLETICS—Agreed to terms with DH/OF Hideki Matsui on a one-year contract.
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Named Steve Watson pitching coach of Charlotte (FSL) and Neil Allen pitching coach of Durham (IL).
NATIONAL LEAGUE
CINCINNATI REDS—Agreed to terms with OF Jay Bruce on a six-year contract.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Agreed to terms with C Dioner Navarro on a one-year contract.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES—Agreed to terms with 1B Lyle Overbay on a one-year contract.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with C Gerald Laird on a one-year contract.
WASHINGTON NATIONALS—Agreed to terms with OF/1B Matt Stairs on a minor league contract.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

ST. PAUL SAINTS—Traded 1B Kris Sanchez to New Jersey (Can-Am) for cash.
WICHITA WINGNUTS—Released INF Cesar Suarez.

CAN-AM LEAGUE

WORCESTER TORNADOES—Traded INF Gordon Gronkowski to Lake Erie (Frontier) for RHP JJ Pacella.

FRONTIER LEAGUE

GATEWAY GRIZZLIES—Signed LHP Justin Zinkovich.
OAKLAND COUNTY CRUISERS—Signed RHP Wayde Kitchens to a contract extension.

BASKETBALL

NBA

MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES — Assigned F DeMarre Carroll to Dakota (NBADL).

LACROSSE

NLL

COLORADO MAMMOTH—Announced the retirement of G Curtis Palidwor.

FOOTBALL

NFL

CAROLINA PANTHERS—Placed G Travelle Wharton, DE Everette Brown and LB Jason Williams on injured reserve. Signed DT Corvey Irvin and CB R.J. Stanford from the practice squad. Signed DT Tommie Duhart to the practice squad.
MIAMI DOLPHINS—Placed OT Vernon Carey on injured reserve. Signed WR Kevin Curtis.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Placed CB Chris Cook on injured reserve. Signed OT Thomas Welch from the practice squad.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES—Signed DE Derrick Burgess.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS—Placed WR Deon Butler on injured reserve. Signed G Paul Fanaika from Cleveland's practice squad.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS—Placed DT Gerald McCoy and LB Quincy Black on injured reserve. Signed DE George Johnson and LB Tyrone McKenzie from the practice squad.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Released P Hunter Smith. Signed P Sam Paulescu.

CFL

EDMONTON ESKIMOS — Announced special teams coordinator and assistant head coach Noel Thorpe, receivers coach Jason Tucker and defensive backs coach Stacey Hairston will not return next season.

HOCKEY

NHL

ANAHEIM DUCKS—Signed senior vice president of hockey operations David McNab and coach Randy Carlyle to a contract extension through the 2011-12 season.
CAROLINA HURRICANES — Recalled D Bryan Rodney from Charlotte (AHL) on an emergency basis.
NEW JERSEY DEVILS—Placed LW Brian Rolston on waivers. Recalled C Tim Sestito from Albany (AHL).
NEW YORK ISLANDERS—Returned D Dylan Reese and R Rhett Rakhshani to Bridgeport (AHL).
VANCOUVER CANUCKS—Assigned F Guillaume Desbiens to Manitoba (AHL).

SOCCER

MLS

DC UNITED—Signed D Ethan White.

FOOTBALL

NCAA

All Times Eastern
Saturday's games
NEW MEXICO BOWL
At Albuquerque, N.M.
Texas-El Paso (6-6) vs. Brigham Young (6-6), 2 p.m.
HUMANITARIAN BOWL
At Boise, Idaho
Northern Illinois (10-3) vs. Fresno State (8-4), 5:30 p.m.
NEW ORLEANS BOWL
Ohio (8-4) vs. Troy (7-5), 9 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 21
BEEF 'O' BRADY'S BOWL
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
Louisville (6-6) vs. Southern Mississippi (8-4), 8 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 22
MAACO BOWL
At Las Vegas
Utah (10-2) vs. Boise State (11-1), 8 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 23
POINSETTIA BOWL
At San Diego, Calif.
San Diego State (8-4) vs. Navy (8-3), 8 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 24
HAWAII BOWL
At Honolulu
Hawaii (10-3) vs. Tulsa (9-3), 8 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 26
LITTLE CAESARS PIZZA BOWL
At Detroit
Toledo (8-4) vs. Florida International (6-6), 8:30 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 27
INDEPENDENCE BOWL
At Shreveport, La.
Georgia Tech (6-6) vs. Air Force (8-4), 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 28
CHAMPS SPORTS BOWL
At Orlando, Fla.
North Carolina State (8-4) vs. West Virginia (9-3), 6:30 p.m.
INSIGHT BOWL
At Tempe, Ariz.
Missouri (10-2) vs. Iowa (7-5), 10 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 29
MILITARY BOWL
At Landover, Md.
East Carolina (6-6) vs. Maryland (8-4), 2:30 p.m.
TEXAS BOWL
At Houston
Baylor (7-5) vs. Illinois (6-6), 6 p.m.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	11	2	0	.846	415	276
N.Y. Jets	9	4	0	.692	273	242
Miami	7	6	0	.538	225	244
Buffalo	3	10	0	.231	256	339

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	5	0	.615	295	331
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	347	318
Houston	5	8	0	.385	316	355
Tennessee	5	8	0	.385	291	265

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	290	198
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	294	229
Cleveland	5	8	0	.385	235	252
Cincinnati	2	11	0	.154	262	345

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	5	0	.615	295	268
San Diego	7	6	0	.538	354	253
Oakland	6	7	0	.462	314	307
Denver	3	10	0	.231	269	376

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
N.Y. Giants	9	4	0	.692	329	250
Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	374	308
Washington	5	8	0	.385	238	310
Dallas	4	9	0	.308	321	366

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	11	2	0	.846	335	243
New Orleans	10	3	0	.769	330	240
Tampa Bay	8	5	0	.615	260	267
Carolina	1	12	0	.077	164	338

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	9	4	0	.692	253	228
Green Bay	8	5	0	.615	306	189
Minnesota	5	8	0	.385	230	274
Detroit	3	10	0	.231	285	309

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	6	7	0	.462	261	329
St. Louis	6	7	0	.462	245	268
San Francisco	5	8	0	.385	243	280
Arizona	4	9	0	.308	243	351

x — clinched playoff berth.

WEEK 14

Monday's results
Baltimore 34 Houston 28 (OT)
At Detroit
N.Y. Giants 21 Minnesota 3
Sunday's results
Arizona 43 Denver 13
Atlanta 31 Carolina 10
Buffalo 13 Cleveland 6
Detroit 7 Green Bay 3
Jacksonville 38 Oakland 31
Miami 10 N.Y. Jets 6
New England 36 Chicago 7
New Orleans 31 St. Louis 13
Pittsburgh 23 Cincinnati 7
San Diego 31 Kansas City 0
San Francisco 40 Seattle 21
Tampa Bay 17 Washington 16
Philadelphia 30 Dallas 27
N.Y. Giants at Minnesota (ppd., snow and stadium problems)

WEEK 15

Tomorrow's game
(All times Eastern)
San Francisco at San Diego, 8:20 p.m.
Sunday's games
Kansas City at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
Washington at Dallas, 1 p.m.
Houston at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Arizona at Carolina, 1 p.m.
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.
Detroit at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Miami, 1 p.m.
Jacksonville at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Baltimore, 1 p.m.
Atlanta at Seattle, 4:05 p.m.
Denver at Oakland, 4:15 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh, 4:15 p.m.
Green Bay at New England, 8:20 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 20
Chicago at Minnesota, 8:30 p.m.

5 drive

Could Lincoln's new MKZ Hybrid sedan be the most efficient luxury car in North America?

▶ The Hybrid's powertrain is lifted straight from the Ford Fusion and mixes a four-cylinder gas engine with an electric helper motor. The car can actually travel up to 75 kilometres per hour on electric power alone.

A premium hybrid that's worth the hybrid premium

MALCOLM GUNN
DRIVE@METRONEWS.CA
WHEELBASE MEDIA

Could the Lincoln MKZ be the poster child for delivering hybrid technology at a down-to-earth price?

Ford's premium Lincoln division touts the new MKZ Hybrid sedan as the most efficient luxury car in North America and brags up its hyper-extended fuel economy. And with a $43,750 price tag, this MKZ also happens to be one of the better buys out there.

The hybrid version of the MKZ is new to the line-up for the 2011 model year, but its drive system was first installed in the Ford Fusion and Mercury Milan (upon which the MKZ is based) for the 2010 model year. At about 1,635 kilograms — about 225 kilograms lighter than Lincoln's larger MKS sedan — the MKZ is an ideal platform to apply the hybrid magic wand.

Of course, the MKZ has to look the part of an upscale contender, and it really does. It might be based on the humble Ford Fusion, but Lincoln's designers have done a solid job sculpting a distinctive front end. A delicately creased hood and jewel-like wrap-around headlights frame the brand's signature "waterfall" grille. The taillights and trunk lid have also been dressed up with the Lincoln touch.

▶ An exclusive to Ford products, Sync allows hands-free command of a variety of vehicle functions.

The icing on the cake is a cool set of nine-spoke 17-inch alloy wheels that have been fitted with special low-rolling-resistance tires.

You might expect that Lincoln would scrimp a bit on the Hybrid's interior content to maintain price parity with its V6 gas-powered stablemate.

Not at all, actually. This MKZ offers up standard genuine walnut or ash wood trim plus leather-covered seats that are power-adjustable (with memory settings) and heated and cooled in front.

There are also standard backup sensors as well as Ford's Microsoft-powered, voice-activated Sync system that controls a number of communication, entertainment and climate-control functions.

Other unique standard features include a capless fuel filler that makes topping up a one-handed affair, while a keyless entry pad is handy if you're heading to the beach or out for a jog and don't want to bring a set of keys along.

Optional is a power sunroof, voice-activated navigation system, keyless remote start, rear-view camera, blind-spot warning alert and a premium THX-brand audio package.

The Hybrid powertrain consists of a 156-horsepower 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine assisted by a 40-horsepower electric motor.

The net power output is 191 horses directed to the front wheels via a continuously variable transmission (CVT).

If the MKZ Hybrid catches on — and it's tough to see how it won't — you can expect other automakers to try and match this Lincoln's impressive fuel economy, features and price point.

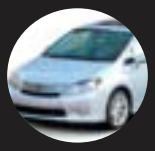
MKZ Hybrid

What you should know about the 2011 Lincoln MKZ Hybrid:

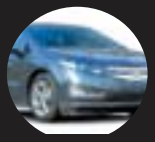
- **Type:** Four-door, mid-size, front-wheel-drive, entry-luxury sedan
- **Engine (hp):** 2.5-litre DOHC I4, combined with an electric motor (191, net)
- **Transmission:** Continuously variable.
- **Market Position:** Lincoln is venturing into the premium hybrid arena that's currently dominated by Lexus, along with offerings from Mercedes-Benz and BMW. However the MKZ raises the bar with its fuel-sipping powertrain.
- **Points:** Outstanding fuel economy along with a reasonable base price; Not a stripped-down model; arrives with plenty of creature comforts; Roomy interior beats primary competitors; No all-wheel-drive option.
- **Safety:** Front airbags; side-impact airbags; side-curtain airbags; anti-lock brakes; traction control; stability control.
- **Stats:** L/100 km (city/hwy) 4.6/5.4;
- **Base price:** $43,750 (Including destination).

By comparison

Lexus HS 250h
Base price: $41,850
Prius-based model adds more power, but is not nearly as fuel-efficient.



Chevrolet Volt
Base price: $47,000 (est.)
Electric motor combines with gas assistant to offer unlimited range.



Infiniti M
Base price: $65,000 (est.)
Upcoming 2012 model features V6 plus electric motor to make 369 hp.

WHEELBASE MEDIA

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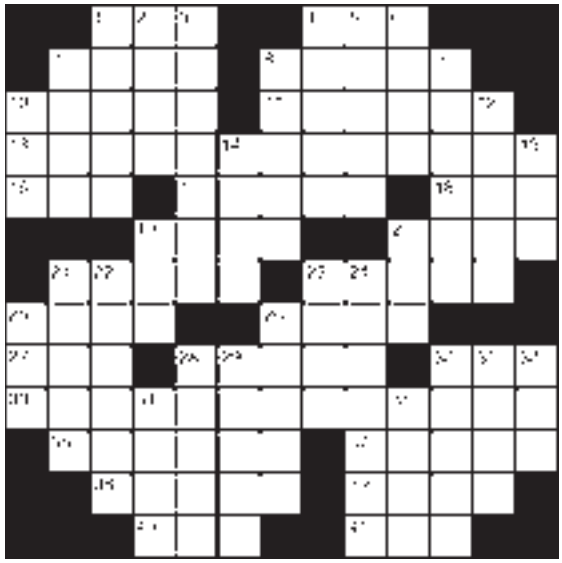
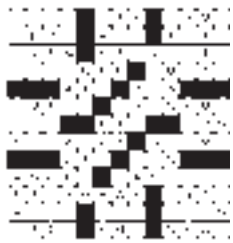
Crossword



Across
1 Part of a Halloween costume
4 You say it to the doctor
7 Femur or fibula
8 Related to birds
10 Soft chapeau
11 "Dueling" instruments
13 Burroughs duo
16 Distorted
17 Witticisms
18 Fish eggs
19 Inlet
20 Out of control
21 Investigate
23 Brittle
25 Three- — sloth
26 Objective
27 Mimic
28 Chef's garb
30 "Wham!"
33 Stevenson duo
36 Closed up tight
37 Broadcast
38 Small amounts
39 Caustic solutions
40 Sandra or Ruby
41 Remiss

Down
1 Fret
2 Noted 1966 hurricane
3 1958 No. 1 hit for the Silhouettes
4 — -garde
5 Harts' mates
6 Muslims' pilgrimage
7 Tolerate
8 Lower in rank
9 Venus de Milo's feature
10 Texter's "incidentally"
12 Pry
14 Actress Campbell
15 Hair-raising shriek
19 Massachusetts cape
20 Have a bug
21 Vatican VIPs
22 Stunk
23 Maine — (breed of cat)
24 TV's Felix Unger
25 — Mahal
26 Alumni
28 Sitcom oldie, "Kate & —"
29 Academy freshman
30 Heat-resistant glass
31 Tributes in verse
32 Marry
34 Three feet
35 Informal greeting

▶ Yesterday's answer



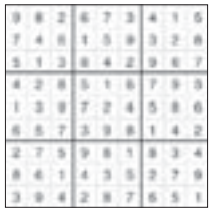
Sudoku

					8	3		6
3	7		5	9				4
	6							
1		3			2	6		
4								2
		8	3			4		5
							4	
9				5	1		2	7
2		4	8					

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶



Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Cristina, i feel so lucky to be with you. I am excited for all the great memories we are going to make during these holidays.
LOVE , YOUR MAN, ARTHUR

Ashley & Amy, You are two amazing young ladies and I am blessed to have you as my sisters. Enjoy your 12 days of Christmas ;)
LOVE, OMA

Happy 3 yr Anniversary Mi Amor. You are a friend for always and life. You had me at one dance. Knowing you was all my pleasure. I just want you to know that you are my teasure. Stay sweet and caring always. I will always and forever love you.
L.F.A.A.

Sending all my love on this wintery morning. Growing old and wrinkly together is going to be quite the adventure and I feel so lucky to be doing it with you. **BORK!**

Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Reach out to employers today. If they make promises, get them to put them in writing. What they agree to today may not be what they want to do tomorrow.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 The more you expect of other people today, the more disappointed you are likely to be. Saying something and doing it are two entirely different things, so don't count your chickens just yet.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 The planets warn if you act too fast today you are likely to do more harm than good. No matter how bad things may seem, there is still time to think before you take action.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 If you suspect that someone is not being completely truthful today, don't make a big fuss about it. Sooner or later, he or she will let you know what's going on.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 You may be thinking about a career change but the planets urge you to sleep on the idea. Chances are you are not thinking straight. The next few days will bring new opportunities, so don't change yet.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 This is not really the best time to be looking a long way ahead. In fact, you should be looking at what is in front of you right now. The next step you take is the one that matters.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 Put your worries out of your head and start believing that your dream will come true. Success is as much about imagination as it is about hard work.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 You can be judgmental at times, but today you must make a conscious effort not to be critical. You don't have to like what a friend or relative is doing but you have to accept that it's the right move for him or her.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 As a Fire sign, you are no stranger to taking risks. Over the next two or three days, you will be tempted to do things that most people would never attempt. But that's why you are special.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Make sure that any claims you make are backed by facts. Sometimes it can be fun to make things up, but you will lose others' trust and respect if you try it today.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 You have an envious ability to see further and deeper than most people. But are you making good use of it? Shouldn't you be helping others see the truth, too?

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 You have suspicions that someone is telling you lies; but how do you prove it? Maybe it's not worth the effort. Thank them for their advice — and do what you were going to do anyway.
SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

JERRY HOLT/AP/THE STAR-TRIBUNE

WIN!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image to the right and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

KHALIL HAMRA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/FILE

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vancouverchristian.org

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NOW SAVE $1,600‡

2011 ACCENT L 3DR

GL Sport model shown

OWN IT FOR ONLY **$161†** MONTH AT **0%** APR/ 84 MOS. WITH **$0** DOWN PAYMENT

STARTING FROM **$13,500♦**

HIGHWAY 5.7L/100 KM – 50 MPG▼

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2010 ELANTRA L

Limited model shown

OWN IT FOR ONLY **$173†** MONTH AT **0%** APR/ 84 MOS. WITH **$0** DOWN PAYMENT

Dealer participation of $500 included.

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TURBO NOW AVAILABLE

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GRADUATE REBATE PROGRAM

"The Hyundai names, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trademarks owned by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. ♦Prices for models shown: 2011 Accent 3 Dr GL Sport is $17,844, 2010 Elantra Limited is $22,944. Delivery and Destination charges of $1,495/$1,495 are included. Registration, insurance, license fees and all applicable taxes are excluded. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. ◊Finance offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on new 2011 Tucson models with an annual finance rate of 0% for 60 months. †Finance offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on new 2011 Accent L 3 Dr 5-speed/2010 Elantra L 5-speed with an annual finance rate of 0%/0% for 84/84 months. Monthly payments are $161/$173. No down payment is required. Dealer participation of $500 for 2010 Elantra L 5-speed is included. Finance offers include Delivery and Destination of $1,495/$1,495. Registration, insurance, PPSA license fees and all applicable taxes are excluded. Delivery and destination charge includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. Financing example: 2010 Elantra L 5-speed for $14,500 at 0% per annum equals $172.61 per month for 84 months for a total obligation of $14,500. Cash price is $14,500. Example price includes Delivery and Destination of $1,495. Registration, insurance, PPSA license fees and all applicable taxes are excluded. ‡Purchase or lease any 2011 Accent and receive a price adjustment of $1,600. *Leasing offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on a new 2011 Sonata GL 4-speed with an annual lease rate of 4.4%. Monthly payment is $299 per month for a 60 month walk-away lease. Down payment of $2,600 and first monthly payment required. Total lease obligation is $20,540. Lease offers include Delivery and Destination of $1,495. Registration, insurance, PPSA license fees and all applicable taxes are excluded. ‡‡Purchase or lease any 2011 Tucson and receive a price adjustment of $4,000. ▲Based on 2011 Tucson 6-speed manual 2.4L FWD vs. 2010 Tucson 6-speed manual 2.4L FWD. ^Based on EnerGuide fuel consumption ratings. Actual fuel efficiency may vary based on driving habits and conditions. Fuel economy figures are used for comparison purposes only. ^^Based on combined fuel consumption rating for the 2011 Sonata GL 6-speed manual. Thrifty 6.7L/100KM. City 9.1L/100KM. Highway 5.2L/100KM. Based on 2011 Energuide estimates. Fuel consumption ratings based on Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) New Car Fuel Consumption Report. The 2011 Sonata GL 6-speed manual is the most fuel efficient 2011 Intermediate vehicle as rated by NRCan. ∞Based on Canadian sales data for the period from January 1 to October 31, 2010 for the Hyundai Accent, Elantra, Tucson and Santa Fe. ◊◊See your dealer for details of the Graduate Rebate Program. ††Hyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions, to all the trim levels of the 2011 Sonata produced after July 2, 2010. ^Based on the October 2010 AIAMC report. ΔSee your dealer for eligible vehicles and full details of the Graduate Rebate Program.